

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2154

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS1

TAGS: PFOR, ID, AS, PARM, PP

SUBJ: WHITLAM-SUHARTO TALKS IN TOWNSVILLE

1. SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN DFA IS SATISFIED WITH THE WHITLAM-SUHARTO MEETING APR 3-5. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE MEETING FROM THE AUSTRALIAN POINT OF VIEW WAS TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE INDONESIANS THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MUST REMAIN GOOD AND WOULD NOT BE SPOILED BY ISSUES LIKE THE FUTURE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND THE FATE OF INDONESIA'S POLITICAL PRISONERS. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF REVIEWED RESULTS OF WHITLAM-SUHARTO MEETING WITH MICHAEL CURTIN, DFA'S INDONESIAN DESK OFFICER, ON APRIL 7. AUSTRALIANS FELT THAT THE VISIT HAD GONE WELL AND THAT NO PROBLEMS HAD ARISEN BETWEEN WHITLAM AND SUHARTO. THE TWO LEADERS HAD SPENT A TOTAL OF EIGHT HOURS IN FOUR SESSIONS ALONE WITH INTERPRETERS AND DFA HAD NOT YET BEEN GIVEN A DETAILED BRIEFING ON ALL THE SUBJECTS COVERED.

3. MAIN PURPOSE OF THE VISIT - THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS
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TO ALLOW THE LEADERS TO MEET TOGETHER IN INFORMAL SURROUNDINGS

AND TO ENABLE THE PRIME MINISTER TO REINFORCE TO SUHARTO THE IMPORTANCE WHICH AUSTRALIA ATTACHES TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA AND THE FACT THAT MINOR IRRITANTS LIKE PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND INDONESIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO SPOKE THESE GOOD RELATIONS.

4. PORTUGUESE TIMOR - ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR WHITLAM EXPRESSED THE AUSTRALIAN VIEW THAT TIMORESE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. SUHARTO ASSURED WHITLAM THAT INDONESIA HAD NO EXPANSIONIST PLANS, BUT MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE WORST. THE AUSTRALIANS TOOK THIS TO MEAN THAT INDONESIA WAS WORRIED ABOUT A SUDDEN PORTUGUESE WITHDRAWAL FROM EAST TIMOR. ALI MURTOPO WAS EVEN MORE EMPHATIC. HE TOLD DFA OFFICIALS THAT INDONESIA HAD NO INTEREST AT ALL IN EAST TIMOR, WHICH HE DESCRIBED IN UNFLATTERING TERMS. MURTOPO EXPRESSED IRRITATION ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS STORIES ALLEGING THAT INDONESIA PLANNED TO INVADE TIMOR. EARLY IN THE VISIT WHEN A GROUP OF ABOUT 50 STUDENTS FROM JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY PROTESTED FOR TIMORESE SELF-DETERMINATION IN FRONT OF THE TOWNSVILLE MOTEL WHERE SUHARTO'S PARTY WAS STAYING, MURTOPO WENT INTO THE GROUP AND TALKED TO THEM. HE THEN RETURNED TO THE DFA OFFICIALS AND SAID, QTE I HAVE THE IDEA THAT THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE EAST TIMOR IS. END QTE

5. NPT - THE TWO LEADERS ALSO DISCUSSED THE NPT. SUHARTO SAID THAT THE MAJOR DECISION FOR INDONESIA HAD BEEN TO SIGN THE NPT. INDONESIA WAS IN NO HURRY TO RATIFY THE NPT, SINCE RATIFICATION WAS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO THE GOI. WHITLAM TOLD SUHARTO THAT IF THIS INDEED WAS THE CASE INDONESIA SHOULD MOVE THE TREATY FORWARD BY RATIFYING IT NOW.

6. INDOCHINA - THE AUSTRALIANS WERE SURPRISED BY THE CONCERN WHICH MEMBERS OF SUHARTO PARTY EXPRESSED OVER EVENTS IN INDOCHINA. THE TWO LEADERS DISCUSSED THE SITUATION BRIEFLY, BUT MURTOPO AND OTHERS IN THE PARTY REFERRED TO IT CONSTANTLY. THE INDONESIANS SIMPLY COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT THE USG WOULD NOT COME TO THE ASSISTANCE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, AND SAID THAT A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD GREATLY ENCOURAGE DISSIDENT ELEMENTS IN INDOCHINA. MURTOPO SAID IN THIS CONTEXT - QTE INDONESIA NEEDS EIGHT MORE YEARS OF SECURITY TO PUT ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER. END QTE

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7. PAPUA NEW GUINEA - WHITLAM TOLD SUHARTO THAT SECESSIONIST ELEMENTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA COULD BE HANDLED POLITICALLY BY CHIEF MINISTER SOMARE WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY.

8. JAPAN - THE TWO LEADERS ALSO DISCUSSED RELATIONSHIPS WITH JAPAN. DFA, WHICH HAD ONLY BEEN GIVEN A MINIMAL DEBRIEF ON THIS DISCUSSION, BELIEVED THAT IT WAS ONLY GENERAL IN NATURE.
GREEN

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